

RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK OF
THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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EDITOR

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1

Successful completion of the climate change municipal strategies project in the Municipality of Pehchevo

Municipal Strategies on Climate Change Project officially ended in the Municipality of Pehchevo on 18/12/2024. The end was marked by a ribbon cutting ceremony by James Stein, USAID Mission Director and Igor Popovski, Mayor of Pehchevo Municipality in front of the Jane Sandanski Culture Institution. This marked the launch of energy efficient institutions in the municipality as part of the pilot project 'Energy Efficiency in the Municipality of Pehchevo', implemented as one of the priorities of the Municipal Strategy on Climate Change of this municipality. The project included energy efficient renovation and improvements of the municipal building, the municipal Primary School 'Vanko Kitanov', the kindergarten '7th September', 'Jane Sandanski' sports facility and 'Jane Sandanski' Culture Institution. By improving thermal isolation and installing pellet central heating system, as well as using energy efficient light bulbs for street lighting, the community decreased costs and

GHG emissions. The Municipality of Pehchevo is the first one to develop a Climate Change Strategy adopted by the Municipal Council, as well as the first to begin and complete the implementation of a pilot project chosen by the community as the first priority from the Strategy. The project was fully funded by USAID and implemented by Milieukontakt Macedonia whose local partner was the Association – Centre for Medicinal Herbs and Forest Fruits Ambrosia from Pehchevo.

At the event the audience was officially addressed by the Municipal Mayor, Igor Popovski, USAID Mission Director James Stein, the Executive Director of Milieukontakt Macedonia Igor Slavkovski, as well as Zlatko Samardziev, Coordinator of the Program on Small Grants of the Global Ecology Fund, who used the opportunity to promote a new project 'Reducing CO2 and saving money by substituting fossil fuels with a renewable energy source at the pre-school institution in Pehchevo'. This project began as a result of the cooperation between the Global Ecol-



ogy Fund and Milieukontakt Macedonia and is implemented by the Centre for Medicinal Herbs and Forest Fruits Ambrosia from Pehchevo and the local partners the Municipality of Pehchevo and the kindergarten '7 September' from Pehchevo. The project is funded by UNDP and will end on 30/11/2015.





Activities of Art Point – Gumno for the period July-December



1. Exhibition of Children's works – Wild Plants from my home area

As a result of an inspiration children got from wild plants in the region of Ilinska-Plakenska Mountain, within the framework of the IPA Project "Connecting people with nature – strengthening and networking civil associations in Macedonia", within the framework of the traditional event "Celebrating the Pirej", an exhibition on WILD PLANTS FROM MY HOME AREA was held on 28th August. The exhibition was held in the hall of the 'Braka Miladinovci' Primary School in the village of Sloeshnica. Apart from the opportunity to see wonderful creations children made on paper and from paper (drawings, herbaria and origami), visitors also heard the three awarded literature works (two poems and a riddle).

Exhibition curators were two artists who were resident guests in APG this year: Christine Nicole from Germany and Dick Roberts from USA.



The abundance of wild plants in the region seen with the eyes of the children will be presented at several locations throughout the country. So far, this exhibition has travelled in Demir Hisar and Bitola (Youth Cultural Centre);

in cooperation with other local partners of the project and enriched with photographs from each of the regions, this exhibition will be set up in Tetovo, Ohrid and Skopje.



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2. Celebrating the Pirej for the eighth time

On the 28th August 2014, at the feast of the Assumption of Mary, the patron saint of the village of Sloeshnica, the bells of St. Athanasius summoned the visitors and votaries of Petre M. Andreevski and his messages about the perseverance of the Macedonian character to the eighth celebration of the Pirej.

This year's event was dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the birth of this great man, which has been celebrated by remembrance events throughout the year at several locations throughout the country.

The honor to speak about Petre this time was given to the members of the MakeDocs Festival of creative documentary film and this year they choose Sloeshnica and the art gumno for their seat to set out their project "Travelling Cinema" throughout the villages of the Demir Hisar region.

A statue of the prominent director Vlado Cvetanovski was uncovered on the stage 'White River Bridge' who was one of the creators of the concept for this event. Author and donor of the statue is Zarko Bashkeski.

CELEBRATING THE PIREJ was enhanced with two exhibitions and pro-

jection of documentary films of MakeDocs.



3. Fifth Travelling Cinema of MakeDocs



The Travelling Cinema of the Festival of Creative Documentary Films "MakeDocs" had projected 18 documentary films in the period between 17th and 28th August in Kruševo and the villages Zurcha, Zvan, Edinakovci, Slepche, Smilevo, Suvodol,

Kutretino, Sopotnica and Sloeshnica. Taking into account the huge number of local visitors in all of the villages throughout the Demir Hisar region where it travelled, the Travelling Cinema succeeded in achieving its mission of influencing the process of decentralization of the culture in the country

and allowing for cinema projections in small rural areas. The last projection of the fifth Travelling Cinema of MakeDocs was held in the village of Sloeshnica on 28th August, where together with the hosts from Art Point Gumno, it participated in the implementation of the event Celebrating the Pirej and the Feast of the Assumption of Mary.

The team of MakeDocs spoke on the grave of the great man Petre M. Andreevski. The Travelling Cinema ended in his birth place, the village of Sloeshnica. Real life in the stories of the creative documentary films was projected onto a new reality, discovered on the slopes of the Plakenska Mountain. The eighth cinema under the sky was closed with a short film on Sloeshnica, the sound of the bagpipes of Angel Petkovski from Virovo and the film 'Karlo Traveller' by Matjaz Ivanishin. The end of the Travelling Cinema could be a new beginning and a desire to stay here. It is difficult to bid farewell to this beautiful countryside.



4. Listen with eyes wide open – homage for Michel Rabie

On the tenth anniversary of the death of the French illustrator, graphic designer, painter, dreamer and lover of Macedonia – Michel Rabie (his ashes were scattered on the slopes of Osogovo Mountains in 2004),

an exhibition was held of 12 works of his from the private collection of the Andreevski family at the Art Point – Gumno gallery. The exhibition was officially opened on 28th August, within the framework of the event Celebrating the Pirej.



5. International Fine Arts Workshop/ Artists' Residence 2014

This year's international fine arts workshop/artists' residence, one of a kind in our country, took place in the period between 26 August and 20 September. Four distinguished artists worked at the arts threshing floor in Sloeshnica: **Cristine Nicole**, one of the most established artists at the German fine arts scene; **Ian Triashka**, professor of drawing, digital graphics and graphic design at the University in Bratislava; **Aleksandar Pedovic**, artists from neighboring Serbia who has a multidisciplinary approach to art and design. His inspirational enigma is the question: Where does architecture end and where do visual arts begin?! Plakenska Mountain was an enigma that has inspired him up to now, after the end of the workshop in Sloeshnica; **Dick Roberts**, painter, poet and musician from the USA, who has been a resident of Sloeshnica since 2007. This year he substituted his typical abstract painting expression with figurative presentations.



On 13 September, the doors of the arts studio at Art Point – Gumno were opened for all lovers of art. More than 150 domestic visitors came to the Open studio as well as the children from Sloeshnica and the region. In addition to the works of art they saw and

the opportunity to directly meet the authors, some of the visitors had an exclusive opportunity to taste original Slovak paprikash cooked in a pot the former Slovak ambassador Mr. Robert Kirnag brought to Sloeshnica.



3

Member Organization of RDN Promoted at Bit Fest

The festival Bit Fest which is traditionally held in Bitola, this year again is abundant with rich and diverse program. Among the numerous exhibitions, concerts and theatrical performances, a Crafts Fair was organized where the member organization of the Rural Development Network, Ethno Shop Beba participated together with many guests from around the world. At the Bitola's Shirok Sokak which was decorated with various handicrafts, Ethno Shop Beba promoted the Macedonian tradition and culture exposing numerous Macedonian costumes and interesting souvenirs made by the skillful women members of this organization.



4

Completed Activities by the Foundation for Local Development and Information Technology – FLORIT



The Foundation for local development and development of information technologies – Gevgelija (FLORIT) carried out and participated at several events in partnership with the Greek-Italian Chamber of Commerce from Salonika, the Chamber of Commerce from Kukush (Kilkis), the Greek-German Chamber of Industry and Trade and the Municipality of Kavadarci within the framework of the project on 'Development of Electronic Exchange of Agrifood products and cross-border cooperation' (E-AUC-

TION), as part of the Program on cross-border cooperation between Greece and Macedonia (2007-2013) in the period between July and December 2014.

The idea for the project 'Development of Electronic Exchange of Agrifood products and cross-border cooperation' (E-AUCTION), is based on a successful model of the Italian online exchange of agrifoods and fish (BMTI) which has been developed and managed by the Union of Italian Chambers of Commerce. Through this platform for e-auction, which is the main project activity, local producers will be as-



sisted in meeting the product demand and reaching new channels for product distribution. Also, this project has foreseen support of local producers by means of training for using this platform.

The main goal is development of economy in the cross-border region through activities that would allow for use of potentials and opportunities of the region.

FLORIT participated on a roadshow on 6 September 2014, organized by its partner, the Municipality of Kavadarci. The traditional Tikvesh Grape Harvest was a great opportunity to promote the E-Auction Project in Kavadarci in front of numerous visitors. In addition, the



Greek partners promoted the platform for e-auction, how it operates and how it is useful for producers, processors and traders of agricultural products.

The Municipality of Kavadarci in cooperation with FLORIT participated at the International Fair Expo which took place in Thessaloniki, Greece on 12 September 2014, with its own stand to present project goals and activities. At the same time, producers of wine and honey from the Tikvesh region presented their products.

The Foundation for local development and development of information technologies – Gevgelija (FLORIT) organized a conference in Gevgelija on 6 November 2014 with participants



from the project partners as well as representatives of companies from Gevgelija in the food and agriculture sector, representatives of the RO of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water-Economy, the National Extension Agency and other interested citizens. The conference participants were informed about project goals and tasks and had an opportunity to see the presentations of the e-auction platform and the Guide on investments, innovative businesses and export procedures. In the framework of this event, project partners had an opportunity to visit some of the largest food and processing companies in Gevgelija whose owners showed interest in using this electronic platform.

International cooperation

FLORIT - Gevgelija Director participated at a conference on **Transformation of local food production within the EU pre-accession process: Opportunities and challenges**, held in Istanbul, Turkey on 19 and 20 November. The conference was organized by the TAKSO Office in Turkey in cooperation with the Macedonian TAKSO Office and supported by ESSEDRA Project (Environmentally sustainable socioeconomic development in rural areas).

Participants at the conference included associations, foundations, farmers' associations, cooperatives, unions and networks of citizen organization (CO) who work on the issues related to local food production, food safety and biodiversity, organic production and

agriculture, unthreatening to the environment/rural development.

The event was focused on opportunities and challenges the EU pre-accession processes brings on in terms of local food production, including the following aspects:

- Participation of GO in the pre-accession process in decision making related to the regulation on access to local food and local food production.
- Policies of the EU and the participating countries on sustainable local food production, including standards of production, hygiene conditions and requirements, marketing as well as achieving such standards.
- Access to support and protection

systems in the pre-accession countries and challenges resulting from the industrialization in agricultural policies, including regulations on genetically modified organisms in food production.

- The role and cooperation of CO in protecting bio-diversity of food in the course of the pre-accession process.

Experience of good practice in CO was exchanged in the framework of the conference; the Director of FLORIT – Gevgelija pointed out the opportunities of new e-tools for marketing local food production. This event was financially supported by the People for People EU Programme.



5

Activities of the Association 'Kozjak in the Heart' in the period July-December 2014

'Kozjak in the Heart' Association carried out several activities in relation to environmental protection including clearing up illegal dumps in several villages in the Kozjak region.

The most important activity the association implemented in this period was Bajlovski Meetings, an event organized for the sixth time. It was held on 28 September 2014 (Sunday), in front of the Cooperative building in the Village of Bajlovce. There were over 1500 visitors at the event. This event was co-funded by the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia and the Municipality of Staro Nagorichane.



The programme of the event included:

- Folk sporting games;
- Competition for best traditionally prepared banitzza (pie);
- Old Kozjak-Bajlovce wedding reenacted by three culture and arts associations presenting wedding customs and traditional clothing from the Kozjak region;
- Culture and arts performances;
- Official lunch for participants and guests who came from all regions of Macedonia and other countries.





6

Ethno Day of Young Farmers in the Republic of Macedonia Celebrated



On October 26th in the village of Mokrino near Strumica, the Federation of Farmers of Republic of Macedonia (FFRM) together with the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia (RDN of the RM) and its member organization Horti Eko, organized this year's manifestation "Ethno Day of Young Farmers in Macedonia". The event was enriched with the performance of many musical and folk dance groups from Macedonia and neighboring Bulgaria. Photos from all events held on the occasion of young farmers' day and children's drawings from several schools in the Strumica region, were exposed on boards around event's venue.

"Although it seems that the number of young farmers in our country decreases, yet they are an important link in the development of the agricultural sector in Macedonia. Innovation, courage and enthusiasm, which primarily characterize the young, are equally crucial for the development of the agriculture and rural development in their local communities."- emphasized Marija Trpevska, a representative of the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia. The president of FFRM,

Nikola Stamenov, the coordinator of FFRM and president of the association Horti Eko, Tome Timov and a representative of Prokredit Bank, highlighted the important role of young farmers in traditional and cultural heritage preservation. The main goal of the event was to promote the importance of youth initiatives and activities for preserving and developing rural areas, as well as to encourage their joint proactive participation in improvement of the agricultural sector in Macedonia.

Day earlier, on October 25th in Strumica, the annual meeting of Young farmers Network of FFRM was held. The event gathered many young farmers and inhabitants of Strumica region. Nikola Stamenov, the president of FFRM and Marija Trpevska as a representative of RDN of the RM had their welcoming speech. Vlado Srbinovski, the president of Balkanija - Balkan Association of Alternative Tourism delivered a presentation on "Perspectives of young rural population in agro-tourism in Macedonia". Prof. Vjekoslav Tanaskovic PhD, of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food shared the results obtained so far from the activities realized within the USAID Adaptation to Climate change in Agriculture

Project, implemented by RDN of the RM. He familiarized the participants with climate change influence on agricultural production and explained the benefits of implementation of water conservation measures in coping with the negative effects of climate change.

After the meeting, the young farmer and president of Horti Eko association, Tome Timov, organized sightseeing of natural heritage in rural areas around Strumica. Two monasteries in Strumica villages, Vodoca and Veljusa dating back from the IV and XI century were visited.





Conference on “Challenges of rural women entrepreneurs”



On October 14th 2014 in Multi-culti Center in Kochani, a conference on “Challenges of rural women entrepreneurs” was organized by the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia and Federation of Farmers of Republic of Macedonia. The main objective of the event was to stimulate rural women entrepreneurship by raising awareness of the challenges and opportunities in the rural areas.

Vaska Mojsovska from Timjanik village near Negotino, Vesna Petrova from Lesnovo village and Ana Pachemska from Berovo, shared their positive experiences as successful women entrepreneurs in rural areas.

In a continuation of the event, representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Water Economy elaborated the IPARD program design and details of relevance to diverse farmers. The presentation was followed by an open discussion where attendants - potential IPARD beneficiaries and former applicants- asked questions and shared problems and difficulties that usually occur during the application procedure. MAFWE representatives expressed willingness for cooperation, openness for advices and consultations to all interested parties during the process of preparing their applications.



Celebrating International Rural Women Day

The International Rural Women Day was celebrated for the seventh time in Macedonia on October 15th 2014 in the village of Mojanci near Kochani. This manifestation, traditionally organized by the Federation of Farmers of Republic of Macedonia and the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, had a main objective to highlight the role of rural women in agriculture and rural development.

This year the event gathered more than 300 women from different Macedonian regions. The Mayor of the Municipality of Kochani – Ratko Dimitrovski, the President of FFRM – Nikola Stamenov and the President of RDN of the RM – Petar Gjorgievski gave their speeches.

Gordana Mitrovska – Beba, President of Etno Beba association from Kumanovo and RDN member, Vaska Mojsovska, woman farmer from the village of Timjanik near Negotino and Ljubica Dzonc, coordinator of FFRM women network, by sharing their positive experiences aimed to initiate joint activities among rural women in realization of mutual interests. They emphasized the importance of development of rural women entrepreneurship and its significance for economy improvement in rural areas.

Within the manifestation a contest in making a traditional dish was organized, where 8 women from different parts of Macedonia participated, expressing their skills and knowledge in traditional food preparation.





9

Trainings for RDN Member Organizations Realized

On July 7th and 8th, in Skopje, the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia organized two trainings within the capacity building activities implemented through the USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture Project. RDN member organizations were invited at the trainings, with aim to improve

their communication and presentation skills, and to equip them with knowledge in the area of financial management for projects. 19 representatives of CSOs took active participation in the trainings, stating the benefits and expressing interest for further realization of different kinds of trainings that are important for their field of work.



10

On Field Training in an Orchard in Mlado Nagoricane Village



On September 3rd, in the village of Mlado Nagoricane, an on-field training was organized within USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture project. The demonstration training was held in a pear orchard at one of the project's beneficiary farmers, where different climate change adaptive techniques and measures were tested.

The workshop was attended by 20 NEA (National Extension Agency) advisors coming from different parts of the coun-

try. Project technical experts on Orchard management conducted a combination of theoretical and field education sessions at the project demonstration plot. The significance and benefits from practicing different kinds of adaptive measures such as UV protection nets, cover crops, drought resistant rootstocks and mulching were explained to the participants. The attendants had the opportunity to compare the damages caused by hail to the pears that were not protected with UV nets and the ones that had UV/hail nets installed. The use of protection nets had twofold purpose i.e. it has shown great results in reducing the damages of sunburns and provided protection against hail. In addition, the experts provided a number of useful advices and instructions on utilizing different agricultural adaptive practices aiming to help farmers in protecting the fruit crops from climate change adverse impact.





11

USAID publishes studies on adaptation to climate change in agriculture



The Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Vancho Kostadinovski and USAID ACCA project Chief of Party Petar Gjorgievski also made remarks, while prof. Ordan Chukaliev PhD and prof. Sreten Andonov PhD made short presentations on the findings from the two studies’.

USAID’s ACCA project, implemented by the Rural Development Network, is a three-year project, launched in April 2012. The aim of the project is to help farmers maintain their income levels by mitigating the major impediments caused by the changing environment. Project efforts are focused on the Mediterranean zone, including the Vardar region and parts of Strumica and Gevgelija -- agriculturally rich areas that are most affected by climate change.

On November 5th, USAID’s Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture (ACCA) Project presented two recently published climate change studies – one focused on its effect on Macedonia’s Agricultural Sector and the other focuses on its negative impact on livestock. The livestock study is the first to be conducted in Macedonia.

The findings were shared at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Economy (MAFWE) with approximately 50 farmers, traders, suppliers, and representatives from farmers’ associations, academia, governmental institutions, and NGOs and will be widely available to all stakeholders in the agricultural sector. They provide a foundation of information to be used in future adaptation initiatives in agricultural and animal production, and will serve as a reference document for climate change related policy and adaptive activities in agriculture, particularly for MAFWE.

“Climate change is one of the U.S. Government’s world-wide priorities,” said USAID Mission Director James Stein. “Here in Macedonia we’re helping individual farmers mitigate the effects of climate change.” In closing, he encouraged farmers to follow the many helpful recommendations found in the reports.





12

USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture Project's Results Presentation

On November 7th, at 11:00, within the International Trade Fair "Agrofood", the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia in cooperation with Skopje Fair, organized a workshop to present the results obtained from the activities implemented so far through the USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture Project. Professors from the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food and the Agricultural Institute, shared the results and achievements from the adaptive measures tested in orchards, vegetables and vineyards, as well as the findings from the two published studies for climate change adaptation in agriculture and animal production. At the same time, the event aimed to raise the awareness of the agricultural producers and the public in general, about the challenges and effects of climate change in the agricultural sector in Macedonia.

"Current and future project activities are pioneer steps in the area of adaptive climate change measures in agriculture which will significantly contribute to improving sustainable practices within farming systems in the Republic of Macedonia," said Petar Gjorgievski, President of Rural Development Network and Project Chief of Party.

The presentation gathered over 100 farmers, representatives of NEA (National Extension Agency), agricultural associations, NGOs, scientific and educational institutions.





13

USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture Project Photo Published in USAID Global Climate Change Calendar 2015

In October, the USAID Adaptation to Climate change in Agriculture project has submitted 4 photos with descriptions of the project activities presented therein, for the USAID Climate Change Photo Contest. The decision that USAID ACCA project photo will be included in the USAID Global Climate Change Calendar 2015 along with 13 other photos from USAID projects around the World was announced in December. The set of the best USAID climate photos 2014 will be prominently displayed to USG principals & government, business and NGO leaders from 100+ countries at the UN climate talks 2014. The Calendar was also published on the RDN website and Facebook profile and shared with the USAID Macedonia Facebook profile.



MAY 2015

NOVO SELO, MACEDONIA
PHOTO: Aleksandra Todorovska

In the rural village of Novo Selo, an elderly man learns about affordable techniques to adapt crops for climate change. About half the people in rural Macedonia depend on small farms and orchards, and harvests are highly sensitive to climate variations and weather extremes. USAID is working with small farmers to develop and disseminate affordable practices to protect crops from current and future risks, including hotter temperatures, droughts, floods and storms. Simple techniques like placing nets over orchards to block ultraviolet radiation have already proven useful in protecting fruit from hail and sun damage. A "caravan" of climate change experts periodically travels the countryside, distributing information and hosting open question-and-answer sessions with farmers. These benefits stem from non-climate programs.

LEARN MORE www.usaid.gov/macedonia/fact-sheets/adaptation-climate-change-agriculture

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GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE



6th Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN) Assembly Session Held

On December 5th 2014 in Bansko, Bulgaria was held the 6th Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN) Assembly Session. Petar Gjorgievski, the president of Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, attended the meeting.

During the 6th BRDN Assembly Session, the BRDN members discussed the realized activities in the period September – December 2014, upcoming activities for 2015 as per the BRDN action plan and decisions on the BRDN Membership.





Important Role of Family Farming in Rural Areas

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Rural Development Network of Montenegro with the support of the SEE

Standing Working Group for Rural Development (SWG) jointly organized a Conference on Family Farming entitled "Important role of Family Farming in rural areas". The Conference drew attention to the important role of family farming, the key challenges and priorities for the future, as well as addressing the best means of supporting family farms. The Conference took place on July 1st, 2014 in Podgorica -Montenegro. The aim of the Conference was to emphasize the economic and social environment for family farmers in the Region. By attracting representatives of the Ministries of Agriculture from the SEE countries i.e. member institutions of the SWG, Balkan Rural Development Network's member organizations, representatives of family farmer's organizations, cooperatives and producer organizations, private sector etc., the Conference intended to raise the issues of family farming beyond their field-yards. Each participating coun-



try, including Macedonia, had its own brief presentation about the current situation of the agriculture sector and the family farming as integral part of it. Apart from this, a lot of attention drew the presentation of Mr. Zoltán Kálmán, Head of Department, Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary who had an overview of the main results of the „Global Forum and Expo on Family Farming”

that was organized in Budapest, from the 4th till the 6th of March 2014. Also, big discussion had arisen from the other presentation of Mr. Kálmán on "Key challenges and opportunities for agricultural investments in family farming Where are we globally and regionally?" with focus on his native country - Hungary.



PREPARE GATHERING 2014: Raising the Voice of Rural Europe

The representative of the Rural Development network of the Republic of Macedonia along with around 20 participants from different European countries attended this year's PREPARE Gathering in Finland and Estonia from 5th to 9th September. The representatives of many national rural movements and networks had the opportunity to exchange experiences and learn from each other with a common objective: Raising the voice of rural Europe.

The event was organized in a form of two-day field visits in rural areas near Helsinki and Tallinn followed by a one day conference on September 8th. Some good practices and initiatives in the rural areas around these big cities were demonstrated to the participants. The Finish and Estonian PREPARE partners, SYTY and Kodukant, introduced their work and explained how they manage the cascades of interest and ideas between local, regional and national level in their own countries.

The Conference held in Tallinn, focused on the process of preparing the second European Rural Parliament (ERP) in 2015. The success from the first ERP held in Brussels in 2013, which gathered 150 people from 30 countries has encouraged PREPARE and ERCA to continue with the initiative. The main objectives of ERP and experiences from organizing different national rural parliaments were shared. Within the Open Space session, the working groups discussed some of the issues



that concern rural people potentially raised at the second ERP, the upward cascade process of ideas including the challenge of collecting ideas locally and bringing them to national level, as well as the funding opportunities for organizing the ERP.

In general, all representatives supported the initiative and expressed willingness to engage their resources in synthesizing the ideas and problems that concern rural people in their countries in order to help the process of organizing the second ERP.